

REMARKS

In light of the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

It is submitted that these claims, as originally presented, are patentably distinct over the prior art cited by the Examiner, and that these claims were in full compliance with the requirements of 35 USC §112. Changes to these claims, as presented herein, are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

Claims 16-20 are in this application. Claims 1-15 has been canceled herein.

At paragraph 1 of the outstanding Final Office Action of November 5, 2003, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 5-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mazaki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,124,913) in further view of Tsujikawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,320,628) and Omae et al. (U.S. Patent 5,570,215). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 1 and 5-15 have been cancelled. Applicants therefore request that the rejection to claims 1 and 5-15 be withdrawn as moot. Cancellation of claims 1 and 5-15 should not be construed as an agreement by applicants with the Examiner's arguments, or an admission that the rejections are correct. Applicants reserve the right to continue prosecution of these rejected claims in a continuation application.

At paragraph 2 of the outstanding Final Office Action of November 5, 2003, the Examiner rejected claims 2-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mazaki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,124,913) in further view of Tsujikawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,320,628),

Omae et al. (U.S. Patent 5,570,215) and Gunning et al. (EP 0622656). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 2-4 have been cancelled. Applicants therefore request that the rejection to claims 2-4 be withdrawn as moot. Cancellation of claims 2-4 should not be construed as an agreement by applicants with the Examiner's arguments, or an admission that the rejections are correct. Applicants reserve the right to continue prosecution of these rejected claims in a continuation application.

At paragraph 3 of the outstanding Final Office Action of November 5, 2003, the Examiner indicated that claims 16-20 are allowed. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 16-20 are allowed.

To the extent the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance states, implies or is construed to mean that the claim is allowable over the prior art of record because the Examiner believes the claim should be interpreted to include one or more features or limitations not recited therein, Applicants attorney disagrees with such an interpretation. Moreover, it is Applicants contention that there is no particular limitation in the allowed claim that is more critical than any other. The issuance of the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance should not be construed as a surrender by Applicants of any subject matter. It is the intent of Applicants, by their attorney, to construe the allowed claim so as to cover the invention disclosed in the instant application and all equivalents to which the claimed invention is entitled.

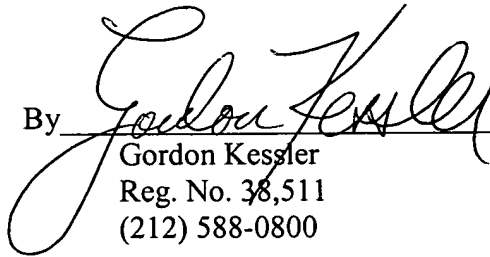
It is to be appreciated that the foregoing comments concerning the disclosures in the cited prior art represent the present opinions of the applicants undersigned attorney and, in the event, that the Examiner disagrees with any such opinions, it is requested that the Examiner indicate where in the reference or references, there is the bases for a contrary view.

Please charge any fees incurred by reason of this response and not paid herewith to
Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,

FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP
Attorneys for Applicant(s)

By

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gordon Kessler", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first letter 'G' being particularly large and looping.

Gordon Kessler
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